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ABSTRACT

Highlights of a panel discussion on advisory work and how it relates to teacher centers and inservice education programs are contained in this transcript. The role of an advisor in a teacher center is to act as a helper, counselor, confidant, and supportive professional to teachers who seek their services. An important function of the advisor is to provide linkage between the theory of inservice study and the realistic world of school teaching. Advisors are, as a rule, individuals with special talents and experience in the classroom. This panel discussion focuses on the relationship between teachers and advisors, methods of operating, and typical problems in the classroom and ways of solving those problems. (JD)

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Teacher Centers & Advisory Work

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About the cover The plaid-like grid on the cover suggests both interaction and support. The gray lines resound and reinforce the black grid. The design implies the relationship shared by teachers, advisors, and teacher centers.—Robert Herndon, artist.

Teacher Centers and Advisory Work

A Panel Discussion

Maja Apelman
Barry Kluger
Carie Applegate
Sally Grahn
Jean Jacobson
Helene Ulvestad
Beth Wintroub

Teacher Center Project
National Foundation for the Improvement of Education
National Education Association
Washington, D.C.

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Introduction

The following transcript contains highlights of a panel discussion on advisory work and how it relates to teacher centers and inservice education programs. The discussion was held during a workshop for Western states participating in the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education–National Education Association's Teacher Center Project, funded by the National Institute of Education. The workshop took place in March 1978 at the Mountain View Center for Environmental Education, University of Colorado, Boulder. The panel moderator was **Maja Apelman** of the Center staff. Panelists were another Center staff member, **Barry Kluger**, and five teachers, **Catie Applegate**, **Sally Grahn**, **Jean Jacobson**, **Helene Ulvestad**, and **Beth Wintroub**, all of whom use the Center and its advisory services. Present for the discussion, contributing to it on occasion, and referred to in it were the Center's director, **David Hawkins**, and the editor of the Center's magazine (*Outlook*), **Tony Kallet**. The text includes the panelists' statements and their responses to questions and comments from the participants.

A word about advisory work—or the role of the advisor in a teacher center—is in order. The term "advisor" means personnel (often teachers with special talents) whom teachers use as helpers, sounding boards, counselors, supportive professionals, confidantes. Advisory work will usually introduce a new type of staff—nonthreatening, nonadministrative, staff (as opposed to line) oriented, and teacher oriented.

An important function of the advisor is providing linkage between the theory/idealism/dreams of inservice study and the pragmatic/realistic/firing-line world of school teaching. There has never been a sufficiently strong relationship between teacher education and practice in schools. The advisor could provide that linkage.

Teacher Centers and Advisory Work
A Panel Discussion

Maja I'm Maja Apelman from the staff of the Mountain View Center for Environmental Education. The topic of our discussion is advisory work. For those of you who are not familiar with the term "advising," it's what used to be called consulting, but it's consulting in a special way, which I'll get to later. I work with teachers primarily in schools but also at the Center. The Center backs up my work, and the work in schools and at the Center are related. I am a generalist advisor, which means simply that my background is classroom teaching (early childhood) and not any particular subject matter. Sometimes questions come up that need some special knowledge, and at Mountain View one basic philosophy, and the way we're set up, is that we have people on the staff who don't have classroom experience but who have special knowledge, such as Barry Kluger. He'll introduce himself next.

Barry I'm Barry Kluger. I have not been a classroom teacher. My background is in math and physics. I just finished my Ph.D. in nuclear physics. I have been on the staff at Mountain View Center as a specialist advisor. In that role I have worked on special subject matter areas and helped teachers do more in their classrooms.

Maja Barry is an example of a person who can contribute without having classroom background. The teachers on the panel will now introduce themselves and tell you very briefly about themselves and their relationship with us.

Jean I'm Jean Jacobson. I teach a combined second and third grade in a Boulder public school. I've been teaching in the public schools for eight years. Prior to that I taught preschool, and I've also done some language work in schools. My first contact with Mountain View was when it was a one-room place on the top floor of a building in the middle of the University of Colorado campus. I went up there as an interested person. I wasn't yet a parent and I wasn't teaching at the time, but it seemed like a very

interesting place, and I went and roamed around. My first year in the public schools was the first year that Mountain View was established as the Mountain View Center. I'd done a lot of thinking and a lot of talking with people, and I had an idea of what I wanted to do. I knew that I wanted to make contact with this kind of support group, and so I went over and it's been a happy relationship ever since.

Sally I'm Sally Grahn. I teach in a small mountain school about 15 miles from here. I am on sabbatical leave this year doing professional studies, but I normally teach fifth and sixth grades. I have been teaching for five years in various roles, mostly in the sixth grade, but everything from a self-contained classroom to math and science work. I started at Mountain View the first year I was teaching. I was pretty desperate. Previously I had taught only music, even though my degree was in elementary education. I had a good idea of the direction which I wanted to go in, but I wasn't getting any feedback on my thinking nor having discussions with teachers in my school. I was first attracted to Mountain View by a blurb in one of their workshop brochures, and I took a math workshop with David Hawkins. I think maybe Barry was in on that o... really got hooked. I've been back for a number of workshops and for consultation and to do a lot of work here.

Helene I'm Helene Ulvestad and I've been teaching 11 years in Boulder. I first came to Mountain View about four years ago. It took me several years to establish my relationship with the Center.

Beth I'm Beth Wintroub and I teach first grade. I have been teaching four years. My initial contact with Mountain View was when I was in college. I came to visit one afternoon and that was really interesting. But my work with Mountain View started when I began teaching. I was working in kindergarten at that point. I called up a friend whom I was working with—we were teaching kindergarten together—and asked if Maja could come to our classroom and help us with room arrangement and things like that. My contact dropped off after that; the last two-and-a-half years is when my involvement has become more intense.

Catie I'm Catie Applegate and I'm on maternity leave this year, but I normally teach first grade in a small town about 12 miles from here. I've been teaching for about five years. My first contact with Mountain View was about seven years ago when I was in an experimental studies program at the University.

Maja Thank you. I'll tell you very briefly how the Mountain View Center operates. We're open five days a week from nine to five. Sometimes if teachers want to use the darkroom or the workshop or meet with somebody, we come in on weekends. If a teacher wants some help from a

particular staff member, they arrange a time. We have workshops in the evenings in addition to after school, and we have a Summer Workshop. We also have what we call an Open House, which sounds as if the Center is not open at other times but that's not implied; it's a time every Monday afternoon when groups come and visit and when all the staff is here. However, teachers can drop in at any time, to visit or to make appointments with individual staff members. We send out announcements of all our workshops to all the schools. That's how Sally first found out about us. We're available for consultations, which is getting individual staff members to help or to talk to you. And then there's the work in schools, which is the main topic for this panel.

As I was thinking about advisory work and preparing for this panel, I realized that to present my work in schools as something separate is artificial. It is intimately related to my work in the Center and to my connection with the Center, to the resources I have available there and to the way teachers begin to use the Center after they have had contact with me. I may start working in a school with teachers who have never been to the Center, but they always end up coming fairly soon thereafter.

When you talk to advisors from different teacher centers about their work, you find the definitions of "advisor" are very individual. What you're getting from me is my perception of the role and function of an advisor. My view doesn't necessarily agree with everybody else's. But there are certain commonalities in advisory work. For example, most advisors go into schools and work alongside a teacher in the classroom. This could be called consulting, but consultants within the system often evaluate teachers too and are looked at as supervisors. There is a big difference between the consulting of an advisor and that of the supervisor. Supervision is totally absent in our relationship with teachers. My relationship with teachers has to get established as I work, and it is based on trust. There is no judging, no evaluating, except as one person working with another might put in constructive criticism. I'm not saying that we never criticize or make suggestions, but teachers never feel that I'm going to grade them.

Question Do you go into a school at the request of someone?

Maja We go only at the request of teachers. I never would go into a classroom unless a teacher requested it. Well, *never* may be an exaggeration. If I'm in a school and I've met a teacher in the lunchroom, I might poke my head into his or her class. That's a way of spreading ideas. The initial contact is when the teacher asks me in or when I say, "Could I come in?" or "Would you like me to come in?"

Question Maja, do you ever go into a classroom at the request of a principal—a principal saying, for example, "This teacher is having some

problems. Would you please come and help?"

Maja I would, but I would first talk to the teacher and say, "The principal requested me to help you. Would you like me to?" I wouldn't go on the principal's request without consulting the teacher.

Question But you have not had a principal ask you to help a particular teacher?

Maja No. Until recently we haven't had many principals who have been very interested in what we do. There are just a few, and working with them is not my strength, although I'm trying to make myself have more dealings with principals.

Jean It's important to me that I'm the one who makes the request to an advisor for help. My principal happens to be very supportive and has worked with the Center, but I'm the one who should make the request, not one of my supervisors.

Question Why don't you go to the established supervisor in the district with your request for assistance?

Jean It's a different quality of support.

Question In what way?

Jean The people in the district are overloaded, and they only choose to work in a few places. This is all changing in our district, though; we've been on another system the last two years. Prior to that I could talk to some people from the district. They would work along with me in the classroom and take time to listen to my feelings and thoughts about the classroom. In discussing what was going on with the children I found more reception here at the Center. Now that probably isn't true of every teacher, but that has been my experience.

Sally Until two years ago we had subject-area specialists. So if I wanted somebody to help me with the overall functioning of my classroom and the integration of subject matter, Mountain View was the place to go.

Maja Advisory work isn't just one kind of thing. Any questions that a teacher might have are responded to. I feel my expertise ends in the third grade in terms of subject matter, even though Sally, a sixth grade teacher, thought I helped her. We have not worked with high school teachers, but one can take our approach and adapt it to secondary school teachers.

Two questions that I'm asked a lot are, "How do you start with a teacher?" and "What do you actually do in a classroom?" I'll talk very briefly about how I start and then ask other panelists to add to what I have said.

How I start was brought out by the teachers when they told how their

contact with Mountain View began. After a teacher takes a workshop with me, he or she might say, "I don't know how to handle this in the classroom" or "I'd like to change my room around, but I don't know how." I say, "Well, if you'd like me to help you, I'd be glad to come into your room." That's a common way of starting. Or somebody comes to our Open House and finds out that school visits are one of the things we do, and asks me to visit. Or I'm working with a teacher in a school, and other teachers get interested and say, "Would you have time to come into my room too?" Helene is a teacher whom I called and said, "I'd like to come out and help."

I don't think of myself as a threatening person; I taught for 10 years and often struggled hard, and I feel very empathetic with teachers and very respectful of teachers who remain in the classroom. So at first I thought, "If I go into their classroom, they should know how I feel, and that I won't be judging." But I found out that teachers *are* anxious. I'm going to ask Catie to try to recall what she said in my house a few days ago about how she felt before I came into her classroom for the first time. We had started working together in a Summer Workshop and had made plans to work in the fall.

Catie At the Summer Workshop when I had my first contact with Maja, I was very relaxed and I felt very comfortable. But when I went back to school and I heard that she was coming in about two-and-a-half weeks, I ran around in a flurry trying to get the room to look great. I wanted everything to be perfect. The day finally came and when Maja walked in, everything was going well. It was such a relief when she said, "Oh, everything looks so nice in here! Only two-and-a-half weeks and all this is going on." Whew! I felt relaxed then and it was fine. After that she came on a weekly basis. It worked out very well and I felt very comfortable. But I was really in a flurry and very nervous before she got there the first time.

Maja It's important to remember that even though you have informal relationships with teachers that have developed over a couple of years of talking and working with them at the Center, teachers reveal a great deal about themselves when they invite you into their classroom. They wonder about what I will think of their classroom and their style of teaching. Recognizing that was a learning experience for me. Before I go into a classroom for the first time I try hard to reassure teachers that I'm not going to judge and that I know some days can be terrible. It doesn't take too long before they relax; it's just that initial visit. It's extremely important to build a relationship where you begin to trust each other, before you try to work this way. I've often thought, "How come they accept me so fast?" I think it's partly because I go in and I do things as a teacher would. I try to help very quickly and in a concrete way. I don't just talk and give suggestions; I work, and that makes a big difference.

Catie I think what Maja said about getting to work right away with a small group is important. In first grade when people walk into the room, there are always one or two children who will walk up to them and want to know what they're doing. It really helped when Maja keyed into the kids and went to work with them. I didn't feel she was standing around and making notes or looking at me or judging the room. I thought, "Oh, she must be enjoying herself." I felt much more relaxed when immediately the kids started to do something and Maja wasn't just standing there and I didn't have to look after her.

Maja I tune into what's going on, and I try not to take any notes the first time I visit. When I start taking notes, I always make it a point to ask teachers if it will make them nervous, and I explain to them that I am only writing down things that I want to remember to discuss with them afterward. Then when we do talk, my notebook is before us and I go through the notes. I make an effort to be open and share my perceptions, though of course I may have things in my head that I don't say on the first visit.

Beth Maja came into my classroom in connection with a class that I took with her last year. There were evening discussion sessions, and Maja came into my classroom once a week to do some advising. I had been teaching kindergarten for three years before I was ready to work with an advisor. I had made a contact with Maja my first year but wasn't ready to follow through on it. She had helped me arrange my room and get some things going, but I needed the time alone to familiarize myself with being a teacher. By the time Maja came into my classroom, I had had a chance to try out some things on my own. I had a lot of other ideas but didn't exactly know where to go with them or how to develop them.

When she started visiting, there was that whole nervous thing: "Is she going to judge me? What is she going to think of my classroom?" The first meeting after class took my nervous feelings away because she said what she felt was going well for me and tried to start where I was. She asked what I wanted her to do and how she could help me. She didn't just jump in and say, "You need to do this and you need to do that."

Maja worked with me on just about every aspect of my teaching. One of the things which I was interested in was developing a curriculum that would have more carry-over instead of being a one-shot deal every day. I wasn't sure how to plan and carry through curriculum ideas on a kindergarten level. We worked very hard on that. Then there were some children whom I was having trouble with, and I didn't know the best way of handling them.

An advantage of having Maja in the room is that she is an outside observer and can step back from situations. I find it difficult to step back, being the only adult in the classroom most of the time.

But the most important thing about Maja was her willingness to help me in whatever area I had a question about. We probably talked about 50 different things every week.

Maja Let me give you a quick idea of the breadth of topics that come up in advising. As an advisor you have to be ready to deal with all school subjects, plus all the problems children bring, plus the problems that come up with administrators or parents or student teachers. If you say to teachers, "I'm here to help you wherever you want help," then a wide range of problems will come up. I made a list of what might come up in a week or even a day, depending on how many teachers I see:

- What do I do about the kids wasting all this paper?
- Can you get me some stuff to do siphoning? (With this type of question I may ask Barry to help me.)
- A teacher who'd been back East brought in pictures of Maine and a miniature lobster pot and wanted some help in using them in teaching.
- How do you mix concrete?
- How do you prepare kids for a hospital trip?
- My girls won't ever go into the block corner.
- How do you have a discussion?
- My aide always yells at the kids and I hate it.
- The principal doesn't understand what I'm trying to do.
- I need help with creative writing.
- How do you handle divorce of parents or death of parents or children?
- How do you prepare for a field trip?
- I can't stand the end of the day.
- Can you help me rearrange the room?
- I want to start a unit on Indians.
- I'm having problems with my student teacher.

The qualifications a person needs to be an advisor have become very clear to me after working for six years at Mountain View and four years as a consultant for Head Start in New York. These are my own views; not everybody agrees with them, not even everybody at Mountain View.

1. An advisor must have classroom experience. That's an absolute must. There is an understanding you must have of what life in school is like, which I don't think you can get unless you have been a classroom teacher yourself.
2. An advisor must also have a very sound knowledge of child development and an understanding of children's learning and growth.

3. An advisor should be able to connect that knowledge and understanding of child development to curriculum. A knowledge of subject matter and materials is very important, and so is knowing how to develop your own curriculum.
4. Finally, an advisor should have skill in working with adults. That's probably the area where teachers who become advisors have to do the most learning. Working with adults is a whole new thing for teachers, who have worked mainly with children. It is very important because advisors are asked to deal with principals, teacher aides, parents, students, and university personnel, in addition to the teachers with whom they're working. So there are supervisory skills that have to be developed.

For example, advisors must learn to recognize this very subtle matter of readiness—how to know when a teacher is ready. How fast do you move so that you don't overwhelm the teacher with all your good ideas, which can happen very easily? ("Stop, please. Don't give me another book to read or another pamphlet; I've got to do this at my own pace.") You can get overenthusiastic. When do you pull back? Is there a time when you say, "Okay, let's not do anything for a month"? When do you give a little push?

Beth Maja covered a lot of the problems that she helped me with in my classroom—painting, trips, block building, planning, science activities, working with specific kids—but the most important thing for me was that we talked about my role as a teacher in the classroom, my having to solve my own dilemmas about how decisions get made for kids. When should I make the decision because I know what's best for them, and when should they make a decision because they know what's best for them? Learning how to deal with decision making was probably the most beneficial assistance that I gained from working with Maja. I feel now that I have answered those questions, and when I'm working with a student teacher, I say, "You have to solve those problems in your own head before you try to deal with the kids because if you don't, the kids will know and make it that much harder for you." So it was important for me to answer those questions, to get to a place where I knew what I was going to do, at least most of the time, and go on from there.

Maja What Beth is talking about is a problem for many beginning teachers. They have very good feelings about kids and don't want to come on in an authoritarian way. They have difficulty differentiating between being authoritarian and being an authority.

Question What you say makes a lot of sense to me; I like your attitude of wanting to help teachers and wanting to help kids. But I have a question. I'm hearing that your organization has no specific agenda for what you do in the classroom. Am I right?

Maja None.

Question That's important. It's a contrast to what many college professors have when they come into a classroom. They often have a lot of agendas that have little to do with the classroom.

Maja I have a hard time getting the idea across to some people that my first visit to a classroom is totally open. I want to get a sense of the teacher in a certain setting with certain children and how the day goes. I may go two or three times before I know which way to move. I don't have an agenda except that I want to help the teacher develop a program that speaks to the needs of the children and the class and goes in the direction which the teacher wants to move in.

Catie The matter of agendas also comes up with the student teachers we have. When staff members from Mountain View come in, they help student teachers a great deal. Advisors help student teachers focus on where they are and understand the format of the classes that they're teaching. On the other hand, I've had several experiences in which a student teacher's supervisor from the university came in and was not tuned in at all to what was happening in the classroom. In my Follow-Through classroom the children work in different areas all the time. One university supervisor came in and wanted all the children to sit down together and work on one page in a book. It wasn't appropriate at all. The classroom doesn't function like that. The supervisor could not understand what was happening, which didn't help the student teacher. The student teacher got so uptight every time the supervisor came into the classroom that the experience was worthless. If someone from Mountain View had come in, he or she would have focused on where the student was and helped the student quite a bit.

Question How much of the help you've been getting is because of the teacher center as an institution, and how much of it is Maja? Would this advisory system work in other circumstances? If Maja leaves, will it become another bureaucracy?

Catie Oh no. It's the whole staff. I've worked with several people.

Question Okay, what is it about the institution? Because I see a danger here of creating just another bureaucracy.

Catie All the staff members have the same basic philosophy. They aren't judgmental. There aren't any strings attached. They can deal with very specific requests. They have their individual expertise and a belief that learning should be ongoing and in-depth. They don't see themselves as having just one meeting with you and that's it. There's lots of follow-up.

Question Where does Maja come in when your evaluation or assessment comes up? Also, is there a danger when a person with supervisory

responsibility comes into the classroom and is not tuned in to what you are doing? Let me be more specific. Let's say that I'm a principal in a building and one of my teachers is using your services and doing all these strange things that I don't understand. I come in to evaluate, and I say, "I don't like this. I want the room put back in an orderly fashion." What happens?

Joan When I first started teaching, I had a principal like that. The Mountain View staff was extremely helpful. David Hawkins has a very effective way of talking with people on a level they understand. Sometimes I felt like exploding because I couldn't handle the pressures. The principal would look at what I thought was working well, and he couldn't see it at all. David would say, "What can I do to help?" He had several conversations with the principal. As a result the principal and I came to an understanding. I don't know how much he came to understand my way of operating a classroom, but he was at least willing to say, "You are competent. I may not understand very much about the things you're doing, but I know that you're competent. You know where the children are. You can talk with me about your reading program, your math program." That's an important kind of help advisors can give to teachers—helping them articulate what they are doing. After that first year the principal was at least willing to give me some support.

Helene I'm in that same situation now.

Maja And I'm learning to work with Helene's principal.

Helene I was evaluated this year too. I've taught for 11 years, and the first 9 or 10 were very traditional—everyone sat in rows and got the same worksheet at the same time and did the same art project. I don't know what image the principal has of me, but he's giving me the freedom to do what I want to do, even though he has a lot of questions, such as, "Can you reduce the noise level?" and "Are they spending too much time in the block area?" I don't know whether a first-year teacher would get that much space to try out new ideas.

Maja This is an extremely important question. We have a very definite point of view at our center, which perhaps not every center has or will have. I think a point of view will always develop if a teacher center is going to thrive. I have made a special effort this year with Helene's principal. I had to be pushed to do that by her and her colleagues! We keep telling him what we're doing, and we keep trying to bring him into the room and explain.

Catie I had the same experience. I would get my principal into my classroom as much as I could. Every question he would have, I would try to answer thoroughly, to help him see the learning that was going on. Now

when we have visitors, he brings them to my room. He's beginning to understand and is excited about what's going on. But it has taken a long time.

Sally I can also speak to this matter of administrative support. In the five years I've been at my school I've had three principals. All three have respected me as a competent professional person and haven't given me much static. In a small mountain school, parents are pretty willing to support you. They look up to you a lot, and if you close your door and don't spread the word too much, you can do just about whatever you want. But there is a difference. The first two principals, although they thought of me as a competent person, could not communicate with me at all. I wasn't on their wavelength. I had to shut my door. As long as things went well—they generally do—those two principals supported me. But I needed something beyond that, some communication, which I now have.

I can give a specific example. A couple of years ago some of the students were working on the Elementary Science Study *Sink and Float* unit. A few students were working independently at our art table, investigating different things. I was working at the other end of the room with some other students. The principal came in and went to the table where students were working on the science unit and gave them a 15-minute lecture on why things sink or float. He was not tuned in to what the students were doing. He wasn't tuned in to what I was doing. But because he came in and gave them that lecture and the kids listened, he felt things were going great in my room. He would have told you that I was a very good teacher. He gave me a terrific evaluation—my tenure evaluation. But there was no communication about what was happening. (I would always hear his steps coming down the hall and I would tighten up because I didn't know what he'd come in and do in the room. I wasn't so worried about what he'd think of me, as about what he'd do.)

Now I have a principal who came in every day last year. If he was interested in what I was doing, he might spend an hour or two. One day right after Christmas I was expecting a student teacher. I had planned to involve the student teacher right away in the group, but he didn't show up. I went to the principal and said, "I need some help for a couple of days because I had some things planned. Do you suppose you could come in?" And he did. He came in regularly until the student teacher came. He and I are at the point where we can communicate, and I feel that he functions a lot like an advisor from Mountain View. He's in my room often, and when I have questions I can ask them. I don't feel that he plays a judgmental role; he's helped me a lot by his comments. It's been more than just good communication between the two of us. Networks are forming among the faculty. That's important. Before, things were rather closed. We all had our own

way of doing things and would come into the teachers' lounge and tell what we were doing. Now we are starting to ask questions, and we're able to share our problems and our frustrations wi[illegible]each other in a constructive way, rather than just griping.

Question Have you given any thought to doing anything with building principals? The comments that have just been made clearly suggest that in order for teachers to feel comfortable, work needs to be done with building administrators.

Maja Yes, we have. We made overtures to the principals in Boulder Valley several years ago, before I was here.

Tony Kallet We arranged to have David Hawkins talk to all the elementary school principals in Boulder Valley—about 25 or so. At the talk we invited them to stop by the Center any time so that we could get acquainted with them. In the course of the next year one did.

Maja The Center did make an overture, but I don't think we pursued it with great enthusiasm. We tried to get principals in. We have had principals in, more so in the last few years. Some principals have then requested in-service support for their whole school. Although this has been developing much more during the last few years, I don't think we have made it a top priority. If we had tried harder, perhaps we could have been more successful.

Sally Isn't part of it the principals' having to be ready too? Our principal was part of a course with us at Mountain View because he chose to be.

Beth It's the same as with teachers; you can't approach principals who aren't ready for Mountain View's point of view because it could put them off. But if they are at a place where they are ready to consider other points of view, they will be much more open to what Mountain View offers.

Maja There is a way of cultivating openness and receptivity, which perhaps we haven't done sufficiently. Sally talked about the teachers' lounge and network. Those are two important approaches. I made it a point when I went to see Helene last year to stay for lunch and meet the other teachers.

Helene There are seven teachers at my school. Half the staff is ready for change. As a result of Maja's staying in the teachers' lounge and talking, and our talking together with other teachers—discussing things about children—we developed quite a bit of interest. And it spread. Maja is now working with three teachers in the building, and I think two others are ready.

Maja A question we get asked often is, "Is it fair to spend so much time with one teacher?" We feel that putting your time where there is readiness

and making your work visible in a school is a very effective way of spreading your effort.

Question Maybe one of the strengths of an advisory program is building confidence in teachers so that they can address a principal as an equal rather than as a superior. Is this something that you try to do?

Maja Very much so.

Beth That happened to me. I changed schools this year, and I now work with a principal whose perspective is a little bit different from mine. He doesn't quite understand all the things that I'm trying to do. Yesterday I had a situation that was difficult for me to deal with because it was embarrassing for a child in my classroom. Part of the reason I was able to deal with it—first by talking to the other teachers who had been the cause of the incident and then by discussing it with my principal—was that I felt more secure in my role as a teacher, more secure in what I knew was best for the children and what was detrimental. I was able to present my side no matter how livid I was. I don't think I would have been able to do that last year. My confidence in my role has changed; I feel comfortable asserting myself.

Question Maja, how many teachers do you usually work with?

Maja It varies. If I'm not doing anything else, such as workshops or other things at the Center, I can work with eight teachers at the most—that is, making regular visits. It's very draining. The most exhausting work, for me, is beginning to work with a new teacher; we tend to cover everything. When I go home I keep thinking about what I need to do, what I could do, whom I could get to help me, what materials I could bring in. When teachers have mastered management and organization, when they're comfortable in the classroom, comfortable with the principal, comfortable with the children, then we can focus on curriculum, and although that is draining in another way, it can also be more stimulating.

Question Does a typical encounter with a teacher involve starting out with classroom environment or classroom management and then moving into learning and curriculum domains?

Maja There is no typical encounter. Perhaps that progression happens more here because of our point of view on how learning can best take place, which involves lots of materials and lots of options for kids. If a teacher hasn't been teaching that way, it can be quite overwhelming. Perhaps my colleagues on this panel can illustrate other kinds of encounters with advisors.

Sally David Hawkins worked in my room for one semester as an outgrowth of a math course that I took at the Center. He helped me get into other areas of math and science; he didn't work at all on classroom man-

agement. When he came, he worked with the same six kids, initiating shadow measurement (the study of the sun's movement). At the same time he extended some work that I was doing with number patterns. So his work was in a very different mode from Maja's.

Barry Since I haven't been a classroom teacher, I can't say anything about classroom management. I have to rely on the teacher's expertise and plug in what I can to help extend particular subject matter areas. I offer ideas and suggest materials that can be used. I help with ways of setting up, and I work with teachers' own learning in a subject matter area so that out of their own knowledge they can help extend what the kids are doing.

Joan I've used almost every person at the Center in different ways. It is important that teachers know the staff and how to use them best. There have been various specialists and a variety of other people here for shorter or longer periods of time. Some have had more classroom experience than others. I feel as though I have classroom management down, so I can talk in depth about a subject area which I'm interested in or about something that's bothering me. Even if a particular advisor doesn't have relevant classroom expertise, he or she can help me think things through.

Another thing that I have felt about advisors from the Center is that whatever question I have is okay. It's not a dumb question, and that's really important, for example, when I'm talking to a nuclear physicist, or a musician, or an artist. It's okay for me to ask these questions, and it's okay for me to explore things. Also, I have the feeling—and this is something that has been important to me—that I can sit down and talk about an idea and not go right back and use it. An idea needs to jell for me. I know a couple of people, including Tony Kallet, who have said that it's okay if an idea takes two years to come through in a classroom. Then it's really mine and I've had a chance to work it out with the kids in the classroom. When I accept something because somebody says, "Give this a try," then it's not an integral part of what I do. It's artificial. That notion is important to almost every person who works at Mountain View. Someone asked about the Center becoming institutionalized. I feel that it's the people and their way of viewing me as an individual teacher and the way I've seen them work with other teachers that's important. It's that dynamic quality that makes the Center useful to so many different people.

Question I recognize that you are only one person, Maja, and that there is a limited staff at Mountain View, but it's probably a larger staff than there would be in a teacher center just getting started. We'd be lucky to have one professional staff person. So my question is, Once you've helped these teachers, these professionals, is there any arrangement whereby they can share what they're learning with others?

Maja Advising is a special way of working and initially it's expensive. That's why we stress the networking, the spread. It is a slow, low-key way of working, but it can build momentum. You must be patient. You can't start out saying, "We're going to do this with the whole district, with every teacher." I don't think that's possible. One way to share learning is what Sally mentioned is happening in her school; that is, I try to facilitate networking across schools as I go from school to school and get to know the teachers. I tried that last fall. If I could have put more time into it, it would have worked better. What happened was that five or six first grade teachers from different schools came to me with similar problems. I wanted to start a support group where they would meet and then I could withdraw gradually. It didn't work out because I didn't have enough time initially but that's one way of putting teachers in touch with each other to pool their talents and resources and strengths, and help each other. That's informal networking.

Sally Once you know what's available at Mountain View, even if Maja isn't working in your room intensively one day a week you can help guide other people there. For instance, one year I was thrown into a self-contained classroom at the last minute. I had never taught social studies, but I had some ideas which I wanted somebody to react to. I saw Maja as a social studies expert, and I called her and asked if she could spend some time with me. I took a day off from school and spent it at the Center.

Maja We spent a good deal of time talking. Talking helped Sally clarify her own ideas.

Sally Right. Maja suggested things I could read.

I'm no longer teaching social studies, and we have a new social studies teacher who wanted some type of communication. I knew Maja was very busy, but I was able to say to her, "What other teachers in the district might be able to talk with this teacher the way you talked with me?" And she mentioned some people. That's another extension.

Some evenings Maja has arranged for people to get together who are interested in talking on some subject such as social studies. Those who come are at various stages of growth and are able to share what they're doing in the classroom, reacting to questions and helping each other think about things.

Question Sally, is there ever an opportunity for you to go to other classrooms during the day? Does the district make it possible for you to share your expertise?

Sally I'm sure it would. I don't see myself as an expert. I see what I've gained more as a lot of support from the Mountain View people and from other teachers whom I've been in communication with. I live 45 minutes

from the Center, up in the mountains, and my main commitment is in my school. So what I've gained is a support system that I can also use to support other people in our own little school with the resources that are available locally. I don't have a tremendous interest in going to other schools, taking a day or a half day off, but I'm sure that would be possible.

Maja We have a small grant from the Teachers' Centers Exchange [at the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, San Francisco], for a pilot Intern Advisor Program, in which teachers work as advisors with our support. Catie and Jean are in this program for the second year.

Jean I like doing some work with adults, but I don't want to leave the classroom. An opportunity to work with other adults and to learn from them as well as to share my experience has been good for me. I take half a day a week. (I could take a full day, but I have strong feelings about being out of my own classroom any longer than half a day—and sometimes that seems like a lot.) I work with other teachers who want me to work with them. I choose the half day when most of my kids are at music and physical education—when I'm not with them very much anyway. I have a regular substitute, so the children really know this person. Mountain View pays the district for the cost of the substitute with money from the grant. That's basically how it works. I think the school district could easily pay this cost.

David Hawkins We are not at the point where school district payment for substitutes happens easily. We're always faced with a sympathetic administrator who says, "Our budget was set last year." I think what will happen if we get a Teacher Center grant will be that we will negotiate some arrangement with the school by which we will share expenses for teachers advising other teachers. We might have been cleverer than we were and somehow managed to get this negotiated earlier, but we started out as an organization with half external funding and people were very glad for the free use of our services. Also, we were totally unknown; we didn't have any credentials in the clients' mind, and so the only way we could begin was on a voluntary basis. Once a precedent of that kind is established, it's very hard to change. Teachers are accustomed to our being available, and we refuse to turn teachers away simply because there's no money coming in to support our activities. If a teacher comes to us and wants some help, we do everything we can. And I think that's the way it should be. But we do have to face the budgetary question.

Maja I feel very strongly that teachers' talents are wasted and underused in school systems. Teachers acquire expertise in the classroom and, like Jean, want to stay there. I believe that people become good teachers because they have certain qualities that drew them to teaching. At present

the way up is out of the classroom; if you want to be promoted, you leave the classroom. You leave behind what you have learned and mastered because in administration different skills are needed. But teachers do get tired of being in the classroom, on the bottom rung, and not having the respect that they should get. Unless the situation changes, there is very little hope for improvement.

I was struck when one of the workshop participants said, "I'm not dissatisfied. I like my job, but there is another world out there and I might want to find out what it's all about." That comment made me think about the isolation of teachers in the classroom. It's not only that they're in the classroom with kids all day and not with adults; they are also isolated from the real world. I remember very well when I was teaching in New York city and I took an occasional day off from school. Sometimes I went shopping and I thought, "Who are all these people out in the middle of the day going to department stores, having lunch? Where do they come from?" It's so easy to forget that life goes on outside the school. That's probably one of the reasons that teachers leave the classroom. You can't give fully to children and be that isolated and then have something left over to participate in another kind of life. This notion fits with our philosophy of taking children out into the world as well as bringing the world in, and not using only packaged curriculums. It's important to bring more of the real world into schools, to somehow break down the isolation of teachers. People listen to us talking about specialists like Barry and David Hawkins and Tony Kallet, and say, 'We can't afford that. We can't have people like them on our staff." Using specialists is part of our philosophy. There are people in every community who could be tapped for such jobs. School people should start going outside the school community, not just to other educators but to people who are excited about what they're doing in the world, in any profession. We should invite such people into the schools, use them as resources for our own learning, get them in touch with the children, and get ourselves in touch with them so that we can be a part of that world out there.

Barry The key to effective use of an outside specialist who doesn't have any expertise in working with kids in the classroom, is having the generalist, who has classroom experience, take the lead and direct the specialist.

Maja Yes, that's true about working with a specialist in the classroom. What about learning from a specialist outside the school? Would you seek out people for your own learning?

Jean I would, and I think I could. My knowing how to do that results in part from the assistance Mountain View provided, such as the Summer

Workshop when it was legitimate to explore the city to make contacts that would later be very useful for classroom work.

Tony Kallet I have worked totally as a specialist, not having ever been a classroom teacher. If you go into a classroom with a defined task and if you know what you're doing in your area and if you're not totally obtuse about children, then you can help teachers. I'm often in the position of saying to a teacher, "Here is something that seems to be a pretty good idea. I haven't a clue on how to do it with the class—that's up to you." If the teacher is then able to draw on his or her own resources to answer the question, "How do you do it?" the idea can work.

Maja I'm thinking of an example of this notion about the real world. I used to teach kindergarten, where the activities that worked best with the children were real activities such as cooking and woodworking, not unique school and "little-kid" activities. I remember working with a sixth grade teacher in a school where there were a lot of Chicano and migrant children. The teacher was great with the kids, but nobody else in the school could handle them. I was working with the teacher on social studies. The topic was Mexico. There was a young man at Mountain View who was getting a master's degree in museum science. He was very interested in the culture of the Southwest Indians and started to do coiled pottery the way they did it, using their tools and methods. I asked him if he would come to this classroom and work with the children. We started out showing a beautiful film called *Maria the Potter*, and then John just talked about his own work. What was fascinating was that he talked to these kids exactly the way I had heard him talk to teachers. There was no condescension. The message was, "This is what I do. I love my work. I think it's important. I'm going to tell you about it. I'm going to teach you how to do it." The response of the children was unbelievable—absolutely serious, into the work, asking questions, no fooling around, no discipline problems of any kind. And that says something, doesn't it?

There are a couple more points I'd like to make. One is what teachers get from Mountain View and how work in the Center and work in the classroom connect. Our Summer Workshop illustrates better than almost anything else our way of learning and thinking and working because it's so intensive and the whole staff works together. It was at the Summer Workshop that Catie and I started working.

Catie One important feature of the Summer Workshop is the in-depth study which you get into. You're involved from nine to four every day for two weeks. The entire staff is available for you to consult at any time.

We were working with weather and water. I was also interested in exploring some social studies because I was pretty unsure about how to handle that subject and how to connect ideas. One afternoon Maja asked me if

I wanted to go to the Municipal Building. I really didn't want to go. It was a hot day and I thought, "What am I going to get from the Municipal Building? There's nothing there for me." But I went anyway. I wondered, "How am I going to relate this to my classroom? I'm really not into it." So I tried to relate the Municipal Building to myself instead of my classroom. I saw an aerial photograph of the area to which I had just moved, and I found my house. Then I started looking at maps of sewers and water lines. I got very interested in my place in the environment. As I went home that night, I reflected on this experience and began to think, "Hey! That's where it is with kids too. You have to give them something in their own environment which they can relate to." From my experience of moving from my own home into the environment of Boulder, I began to think about starting with the children in school and moving out into the community which they were familiar with and into things that were relevant to them. It took off into the study of their whole community. We went into real-life things such as the jobs that their parents had. We went to a brick company where one child's father was a truck driver. We went to the fire station where another child's father worked. Another child's mother was a beautician. I think every child had a stake in what we were studying—it meant something to each one of them. If I hadn't had the experience with the aerial map, I don't think I would have been able to develop my social studies program in this way.

Sally I haven't attended the Summer Workshop, but I've been to a lot of evening workshops. It's been very important to me to start where I am in subject matter, and grow. If I can carry over this approach to the students, they grow.

Barry Perhaps we haven't emphasized enough that in our workshops, especially in our Summer Workshop, we spend most of the time working on subject matter at the teachers' own level. There's not a lot of telling teachers, "You can take this and do it in your classroom"; the teachers make the connections. We come in when they start saying, "How can I take this subject matter into the classroom? What activities can I use? What materials do I need? What organization do I need for the classroom?"

Question Jean, how do you handle your classroom? How do you teach? Are you teaching traditionally? Are you teaching with learning centers? Do you use an individualized approach? How has the Center helped you?

Jean I teach in an individualized way. I teach by giving children experiences, partly because of the age group that I teach and also because I think most people need experiences to understand something rather than

just hearing it and trying to put it down on paper. I think of my room as a place that provides resources for the children so that when we begin in a subject area, there are all kinds of directions in which we can go. I don't think in terms of "centers," such as a center for art and a center for math. I try to provide all kinds of equipment, all kinds of work areas, so that children can take a variety of equipment and use it in a variety of ways. I make materials available and I try to build on the children's interest. Of course, there are certain things that I value, like problem solving and learning to do research. I don't teach in what is normally called the traditional way. But my expectations are generally very clear.

Maja I think the teachers on this panel share a philosophy—that must have come through. They share a way of looking at children, children's potential and strengths, and a way of looking at learning, their own and children's. Beyond that, their classrooms are not at all identical. The classrooms reflect the personality of the teachers, their interests, how long they've been teaching, the expectations of their school or special program. We don't tell teachers how to teach or what the best way is. We try to share with them a philosophy, an approach to materials that they can use to create a classroom that reflects them and where they are as professionals, as people who know what's best and who can draw on their own resources and use other people as resources rather than be told what to do by other people.

There's a very personal remark that I would like to make. It's about the support that I need as an advisor. Teachers need support because they give to children all the time. They get drained. They need input. They need nurturing, intellectual and emotional. Advisors need support too. I get it at Mountain View because I have the kind of freedom in my work that when I reach the point where I just have had it, I can spend a few days working with materials or doing whatever else I want to. It gets me into another groove, another frame of mind, and turned on about learning again. Then I can go back to teachers and children.

Question Is there documented evidence that children's achievement scores rise because of your work and enthusiasm? One way to get district financial support is to show that the children have grown academically.

Maja I'm trying to show some of the changes—but not in terms of scores—in my doctoral thesis. Documenting change in terms of test scores isn't the easiest or best way, but that's usually how people do it and what they respond to. So it's a problem.

Question Jean, in your method of teaching are you certain that you're covering all the concepts second grade students should understand and all the skills that second grade students should have—so that when they move

on to a third grade or a fourth grade that may not be taught in the same fashion, they have the necessary skills and concepts?

Jean It's important that teachers, no matter what they teach or how they teach, know what is expected at every grade level. It's also important that they look at the individual child and where that child is and what that child has as his or her background of experience and knowledge. I know the expectations in my school and district for second and third grade levels in all curriculum areas. I look at how I operate and see how each child fits each expectation and assess each child's skill level as well as conceptual level. I wouldn't feel good as a teacher if I presented something to a child who didn't have a basis for understanding it. So I try to create understanding and build on it. I expect other teachers also to work with children as individuals. Yes, I try to give the children what they need, but if they're not ready for it, then they're not ready for it. There's no way that I can present something and say, "I've done my job because I've presented it." My job is more than that. My job is helping a child to grow.

Question What would be different in a teacher center that deals with high school teachers? Somewhere a teacher center will be put together that will deal with high school problems.

Sally I wonder how different it would need to be. High school teachers have a lot of expertise in their subject area, but they, like elementary school teachers, experience isolation and seek both emotional support and some emphasis on child development. These realities and needs apply throughout the system.

Maja I taught a course in New York that was supposed to be for teachers up to the sixth grade. I usually brought in somebody else to speak for the upper grades because I feel strongest when I teach out of my own experience and I don't have it in the upper grades. I was horrified when I looked at the class list and found out there were some high school teachers in the course. I told them what they were going to get, but they stayed. They told me at the end of the course how valuable it had been, partly because of the interaction with elementary school teachers but mostly because of the emphasis we put on child development and understanding children. Kindergarten teachers are supposed to know this, and maybe first grade teachers. But high school teachers become so involved in subject matter that questioning what children are like and how they learn—in terms of the training and the thinking about what teachers need—gets stressed less and less.

Comment (Speaker #1) I am an elementary school teacher, and I have been taken from a self-contained classroom to a middle school where there are 45-minute periods and the kids are shuffled through my class. In

the self-contained room I could get to know the 30-or-so kids very well and know their social problems and needs. But when you meet 180 students a day, you simply don't have time for that. These are the kinds of problems which secondary school people don't know how to cope with.

Comment (Speaker #2) Reacting to the question as a secondary school teacher in the social sciences, I feel that the elementary school point of view these people are presenting needs to permeate the secondary school level. Their frame of reference, of being intellectually challenged, is absolutely essential and lacking right now in the secondary school. It's a feeling we get as secondary school people when we go to specialized academic conferences, where people get together in the evening and talk and chat and exchange ideas. It's a spirit that has been apparent in this workshop, that I wish I could bottle and throw into my secondary school staff room, and say, "Here. Just feel it and immerse yourself in the feeling of learning once again, and you'll go back to your classrooms and view all your kids in a different way." I'm emphasizing the affective domain because I think it gets lost for the subject matter specialists on the secondary level with the isolation they feel within their four walls. When they come out and start arguing in a departmental meeting, they argue whether we should have grammar skills or literature or whether we should have written composition or creative writing. What they're saying is not that but, "I want to know how to get across to my kids the excitement of putting a sentence together and communicating an idea. I've lost it because I've got to get down to the fact that my syllabus says that I *must* teach this particular noun/gerund/infinitive/participle." The whole theory of learning is so lost that we argue bitterly, vehemently, with each other over meaningless material. High school teachers who come to Mountain View cold, and walk into the individual rooms and see different plants boiling on the stove, or marbles in a pot, or rugs being put together, may say, "Oh, my goodness! I'm going to get right out of here immediately because I'm in a world I don't want any part of." Then they walk into a room and sit down with Maja or David Hawkins, or they "engage with the music," and they realize, "What a refreshing point of view! Suddenly I'm no longer in the world of elementary school. I'm where *I* am, on the secondary level. I see a point of view that applies to the simulation I'm operating in my classroom or in dealing with Plato's *Republic*. I see that I can take it and put it right on the kids' level, find out where they are, and make learning exciting all over again, because I'm excited, and if I'm that excited, then I've got to find some way, through somebody's help, to reach each one of those kids to give them that same kind of intensity of feeling that I have about learning."

Comment (Speaker #3) What was just said is very evident right now in the secondary schools. We're being told that we have got to teach read-

ing in our specialized area. Secondary school teachers are continually being told to get back to the basics. But the response is, "I am a math specialist. I do not teach reading." We have to go back and, as was just said, bottle this point of view, throw it everywhere, and say, "Grab it and be as enthusiastic as the elementary school teachers are about each child's overall learning."

Comment (Speaker #2) Integrative approaches must be developed on the secondary level. Last week in a departmental meeting in our school a social science teacher said, "We're being faced with a test coming up in 1982 that's going to say, 'Okay, kid, you've gone through high school. You're either going to get an attendance certificate for sitting there for four years, or you're going to get a qualifying certificate that says you achieved something during these years.' " Suddenly teachers are saying, "You mean I've got to correct grammar? I've got to correct sentence structure? I've got to take the view that there's something more in social sciences than just teaching facts? What's coming about here? I don't have time to do that!" Suddenly, for the first time, teachers are getting hit with the reality that they're going to have to seek some answers that they don't have within the security of their texts or their specialized subject matter. Math teachers say, "Me? Correct grammar?" Science teachers say, "Why? That's the English teacher's sole responsibility."

Comment (Speaker #4) There was a comment earlier in the workshop about centers primarily being places where elementary school teachers go to make materials. Perhaps centers were seen primarily as media or resource centers for teachers, but not applicable to secondary school teachers. We've seen the possibility for a teacher center to be a place of renewal of learning at the adult level for the teacher who is imbued with his or her own professionalism and professional aspiration. The teacher center is a unique concept that can be adapted to the secondary school level.

Maja I want to thank you for making high schools accessible to my thinking. We often get stuck at one age or grade level. I haven't had very positive experiences with high school because my son didn't like it. He's had two years of college and is taking some time off now to reflect. He wrote me recently saying, "There must be a better way to spend the first 20 years of one's life than going to school." I had to agree with him, sad as it is. Now that federally funded teacher centers must serve all teachers, including both high school and elementary school teachers, there may be a chance to bring these two groups together a little more and increase communication across the gap. High school teachers need to learn to respect elementary school teachers for their knowledge and not look at them, as I think they often do, as babysitters—"Oh, anybody can do that." And

elementary school teachers need to feel more confident about what they can contribute to high school teachers by way of their view of the child. Everybody stands to gain from such an exchange.

I'd like to thank the panelists and participants. We have shared a lot.